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C.C.C. WORKERS IMPROVE
MIGRATORY-BIRD REFUGES

Great improvement in the physical development of three wild-life sanctuaries will result from the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps in the East, says the Bureau of Biological Survey, U. S. Department of Agriculture. C.C.C. workers have completed improvements on the Blackwater Migratory Bird Refuge, near Cambridge, Md., and camps are still at work on the Swanquarter (N.C.) and the St. Marks (Fla.) Migratory Bird Refuges.

These sanctuaries maintained by the Biological Survey are all on the flight line of wild fowl in the East. The Blackwater refuge covers an area of 8,241 acres, including marshes and waters where black ducks and blue-winged teal breed and mallards and pintails concentrate. Many shore birds also find sanctuary on the refuge. The Swanquarter refuge, embracing 15,492 acres of land and marsh, is a notable resting ground for swans, geese, and other wild fowl. The largest of these three sanctuaries, the St. Marks refuge, comprises 35,611 acres of land and water frequented by ducks, geese, sanderlings, and other shore birds.

C.C.C. camps were established on these areas about the first of July with a view to making the refuges more attractive to migratory bird life and facilitating their administration and maintenance. On each of the sanctuaries roads and trails have been constructed or are in process of construction, fire lines have been cut through, telephone systems installed, dams built for the creation of fresh-water

ponds, and cabins, fire-tool caches, and other improvements provided.

For the first time on any of the refuges administered by the Biological Survey, permanent steel towers have been erected to improve patrol and observation activities. As a result of the activities of the Civilian Conservation Corps workers the cost of further improvements and maintenance at these refuges will be greatly reduced for many years to come. Work at the Blackwater camp, Maryland, was completed and the camp workers transferred to another locality on November 21. The camps on the North Carolina and Florida refuges, where considerable more development work was required than on Blackwater have been extended for an additional 6 months.

The major improvement activities of the C.C.C. at the Blackwater Migratory Bird Refuge, in Maryland, during a period of approximately $4\frac{1}{2}$ months, included erecting a telephone line $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles in length, removing fire hazards on approximately 50 acres of woodland, clearing 2 miles of roadside, improving timber stands on 15 acres, constructing 1 mile of new road, renewing and repairing 6 miles of existing roads, erecting three lookout towers, drilling two 400-foot wells, and constructing a bridge, $\frac{1}{2}$ mile of fence, a machine shed, and an addition to the headquarters dwelling.

Much more extensive programs of the same general type are in progress at the North Carolina and Florida refuges, each of which is much larger than the Blackwater refuge. Among major projects outlined for the Swanquarter refuge is the creation of nine ponds to improve conditions for the growth of waterfowl food plants. Other principal projects at this refuge include 13 miles of firebreak, 5 miles of trail, and 2 miles of road construction across a swamp area where corduroying is required. The area originally had no roads or other improvements of value and in the past years had been subject to periodic fires, causing considerable damage to the resident species of wild life. Fire-prevention improvements now being provided will greatly minimize fire losses.

At the St. Marks refuge, in Florida, work is progressing on 17 miles of truck trails, 20 miles of firebreak, 27 miles of telephone-line construction, and 6 vehicle bridges. A survey is being made for the excavation of another considerable area for the creation of fresh-water ponds, and other projects of importance to the successful development of the area for wild life are being carried out.